

From the Author of the Prologue

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PROLOGUE,

AND

EPILOGUE,

To the TRAGEDY of

ROMEO and JULIET:

SPOKEN

At the Performance of that TRAGEDY

By the GENTLEMEN of

The ROYAL ACADEMY at *Woolwich*,

For the Amusement of their FRIENDS,

On Thursday, October 10. 1751.



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THE ROYAL

NAVY

OFFICE

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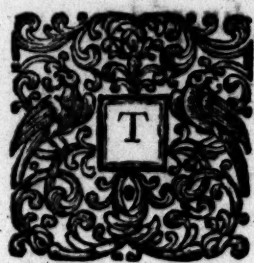
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THE ROYAL

NAVY



PROLOGUE.



THRO' Six succeeding Reigns had BRITAIN been
The Seat of Blood, and War's tremendous Scene;
Two fierce contending Parties claim'd the Sway,
And Fortune gave, to each in Turn, the Day:
Whilst stern Ambition's unrelenting Rage
Made this fair Isle one dreary tragic Stage.

WHILE thus BRITANNIA in her Children bled,
Wit, Genius, Science, all affrighted fled;
(For Times of civil Discord ill besit
Genius' cool Grot, and *Learning*'s calm Retreat;)
They fled to fair ITALIA's happier Climes,
And liv'd in PETRARCH's Lays, and DANTE's Rhimes.

THE Three next Reigns saw War and Bloodshed cease,
And Britons taste again the Sweets of Peace;

Genius his Exile seems no more to mourn,
 And fair-ey'd *Science* meditates Return :
 When Tyrant MARY rose, with Bigot Zeal,
 And pious Rage, to shock the gen'ral Weal :
 Destruction, Ravage, Slaughter, now succeed ;
 By priestly Pow'r the wretched People bleed :
 The Laws of Heav'n are urg'd by Sword and Flame,
 And *Cruelty* usurps *Religion's* sacred Name.

AT length ELIZA came, illustrious Maid !
 Wore ENGLAND's glorious Crown, and Sceptre sway'd ;
 A Prince in whom each virtuous Grace was seen,
 That e'er adorn'd a Virgin, or a Queen.
 Beneath the Shade of her auspicious Reign,
Genius return'd to bless these Isles again :
Learning and *Arts*, thus shelter'd, safely shone,
 Adorn'd her Court, and flourish'd round her Throne.

IN this bright Period noble SHAKESPEARE came,
Genius' First-born, and fav'rite Heir to *Fame* ;
 Who knew, with honest, but prevailing Art,
 Deeply to penetrate the human Heart :
 Each active Movement of the Mind he knew,
 And what he saw distinctly, justly drew :
 Yet still believ'd dramatic Works design'd
 To *teach*, as well as to *delight*, Mankind ;

And

And therefore ever study'd to convey
Some useful Moral in each well-wrought Play.

WHAT certain Vengeance waits on lawless Lust ;
How seldom wrathful Fury can be just ;
What racking Anguish follows jealous Fears ;
With what Unrest her Robes Ambition wears :
All these he taught, by various Scenes of Death,
In HAMLET, LEAR, OTHELLO, and MACBETH.

THUS boundless had he rang'd, and unconfin'd,
Thro' ev'ry *fiercer* Passion of the Mind ;
With Eagle's Pinions boldly dar'd to soar
Those Heights no Bard had ever reach'd before.
At length he plum'd his Wings with humbler Flight,
To form the Play we represent To-night ;
In smoother Verse, and softer Strains, to prove
What Woes attend the gentler Passion *Love*.

IF these his lively Muse with Truth has shown,
And makes you feel this Anguish as your own ;
If ROMEO'S Sorrows heave your Breasts with Sighs,
And Tears for JULIET'S Grievs enrich your Eyes ;
The pleasing Pain to SHAKESPEARE'S Muse ye owe ;
We only strive *her* fair Intent to show :
For that *Attempt* alone we ask Applause ;
But stand, or fall, as *You* decide the Cause.



E P I L O G U E.

LONG time for certain Truth it has been held,
 That SHAKESPEARE every *British* Bard excell'd:
 For my Part, I could never find in what:
 This Play has, surely, a most wretched Plot.
 If he had known the least of human Nature,
 Would *Juliet* have been so strange a Creature
 (When noble *Paris*, blest with manly Charms,
 And golden Treasures, call'd her to his Arms),
 To die for *Romeo*? — Her Husband too!
 Ah! 'tis a thing no Wife could ever do:
 For, ———
 Whate'er the Poets may pretend to prove,
 Very few Women ever dy'd for Love.

IF both her Suitors had indeed been dead,
 Then in her Favour something might be said:
 As she, no Doubt, when all her Charms decay'd,
 Would have receiv'd the Title of *Old Maid*:
 And any Girl had better die with Spirit,
 Than live till she that odious Name inherit.

But

BUT stop-----Perhaps you think-----say what I will,
That antient SHAKESPEARE follow'd Nature still ;
That there are Women now ----- as't might be prov'd,
Who'd die with Pleasure for the Man they lov'd.

WELL then, I'll make the Trial, I declare,
Upon this sparkling Circle of the Fair.
If here's a Lady, who believes it right
To act as our *Juliet* has To-night ;
If she, in every Case, would do the same,
And, for her Love, forsake her Life and Fame;
I say, let her ----- if such a one there be,
Boldly stand up-----and cry out-----I am she.

WHAT! not a Lady speak?-----No-----Heav'n forbid
That any here should do as *Juliet* did.

O SHAKESPEARE! SHAKESPEARE! what, are these the
Ways
You copy Nature in your tragic Plays?
No Woman's Love, tho' she's a tender Wife,
Will e'er last longer than her Husband's Life.

BUT this grows tedious-----Well then, I'll dismiss it ;
And, if you're pleas'd, applaud-----if not, why-----hiss it.

The E N D.

But not that you think—say what I will

I am not an unfeeling fellow I know I will

I want that the woman now—let me be heard

And I will think for the man they love

What then I'll do the time I'll spare

I'll be the faithful guide of the fair

I'll be the body who believes is right

To act as our youth has to-night

If that in every case would do the same

And for that I'll risk her life and name

I'll be the one if such a one there be

Steadily stand up—and cry out—I am free

What! not a body speak?—No—Heaven forbid

Any here should do as youth did

O Shakespeare! Shakespeare! what are these things

Why

You copy Nature in your tragic plays

No woman's love, tho' that's a tender tale

Will ever last longer than her husband's life

But the grows tedious—Will then I dream it

And if you please, repeat—It may be—this is

THE END